*COMET Board Meeting minutes are prepared and presented in* **summary form***, audio recordings of the meetings are on file at the COMET and are part of the approved minutes. If you would like to hear the recording from the meeting, please contact Missey Lawlor at* [*missy.lawlor@catchthecomet.org*](mailto:missy.lawlor@catchthecomet.org) *.*

**COMET BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**March 28, 2018 -12:00pm**

**Members Present: Guests Present:**

**City of Columbia**  Ron Anderson Frannie Heizer, McNair Law Firm

Carolyn Gleaton Alan Bristol, Transdev

Darrell Campbell, Consultant

**Forest Acres** Andy Smith DJ Douglas, Transport Care Services

Charles Gossett, President-MTRA

**Lexington County** Lill Mood\* Larry Livingston, Transport Care Services

Jackie Bowers, Transdev

**Richland County** Joyce Dickerson Chuck Statler, Derrick, Stubbs & Stith

Roger Leaks Loretta Lewis, Transport Care Services

Jennifer Harding\* Hampton Miller, Chernoff Newman

Walter Durst, Vice President -MTRA

**Rich. Co. Leg. Dele.** John Furgess Rick Morgan, McNair Law Firm Robert Morris Rick Silver, Chernoff Newman

Leon Howard Liz Crum, McNair Law Firm

John Andoh, New COMET Executive Director

**Absent Board Members:** Tanisha Woodard, Transdev

Derrick Huggins David Lewis, COMET Passenger

Skip Jenkins Darrell Campbell, Consultant

Debbie Summers Marsha Johnson, Passenger/MTRA

Chris Land, Transport Care Services

Cathy Greer, Lex/ Rich 5

Chandler Cox, Hughes Development Corp.

\**Indicates participation by phone*. John Katz, Fireflies

**COMET Staff Present**

Ann August, Interim Executive Director LeRoy Deschamps, Director of Administration

Missey Lawlor, Exec. Assistant/Board Liaison Rosalyn Andrews, Finance Director

Michelle Ransom, Grants and Contracts Luis Ortiz, Transportation Planner II

Crystal Willis, Staff Accountant Brittany Higgins, Travel Trainer

Pamela Canty, Administrative Coordinator Arlene Prince, Compliance and Civil Rights

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Joyce Dickerson called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.

1. **DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

A quorum was present at the opening of the meeting.

1. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Dr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Furgess to amend the agenda to have everyone introduce themselves, with the introduction of the new Executive Director and create an Item 6a. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Dr. Morris to move Items 15 and 19 up and create an Item 10a. Motion passed unanimously.**

1. **APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 28, 2018 BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Dr. Morris to approve the February 28, 2018 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes. Motion passed unanimously.**

1. **MIDLANDS TRANSIT RIDERS ASSOCIATION UPDATE**

**Charles Gossett** – Mr. Gossett president of the MRTA, stated that they are planning rider recruitment for the MTRA, and that they are looking forward to having transit in parts of the county that currently do not have any service. Mr. Gossett also stated that he and Mr. Durst attended a transit union conference in Washington, DC.

1. **COMMENTS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS**

* Comments must pertain to items **not** on the agenda
* Individuals wishing to address the Board must sign up prior to the Call to Order
* Comment time limit – 2 minutes per person

**Walter Durst**- Mr. Durst, Vice President of the MTRA, stated that there have been some words said over the past couple of weeks regarding the upcoming changes to the COMET system. They have been inaccurate things said by people who should know better. As one of my hero’s, Jim Felder told me last week that the problem is that some people will believe inaccurate statements. I need to remind you that the COMET is for all residents within the region, not just for those who voted for the penny tax and to suggest anything else is offensive. Mr. Durst stated that no one needs to use scare tactics to sway unknowing riders with inaccuracies. Mr. Durst also stated that if anyone continues to do so that he will continue to speak out. You as board members should continue to look at the big picture, when it comes to serving citizens, and all of the area of the County. Our community is made up of many different types of people. No one should feel entitled, or special because of how they voted on an issue. We should all strive to work together in the interest of what is best for the COMET and the communities.

**David Lewis**- Mr. Lewis a passenger stated that he would like to compliment Ms. Missey Lawlor regarding how she handled the situation regarding his fall at the transit center. Mr. Lewis also stated that we need to make sure that our bus stop areas are safe. He stated that the Route 201 has 2 riders that are blind and are being left out when time maybe cut out of that route.

**Marsha Johnson**-Ms. Johnson a passenger and immediate past-president of the MTRA, stated that no one likes route cuts and changes, especially her; however, we’re in a situation, now where hard decisions will have to be made in order to make the funding last for the period it was intended. If those routes aren’t being productive with people riding, that service needs to be cut and the funds/hours can be allocated elsewhere. Ms. Johnson also stated that we need to get the information out to the citizens as quickly as possible regarding the new routes.

**Kathy Greer**-Ms. Greer an educator/administrator, stated that she is the Director of Adult Education at Lexington/Richland 5, and they truly need transit services to their location where they provide for education and job training.

**Chandler Cox**-Ms. Cox an administrator, stated that she works for Hughes Development Corp. at the Bull Street neighborhood site, and she is encouraging the COMET Board to look at adding the Bull Street area to the Soda Cap Route. The additional bus added to the Soda Cap will help employees at the businesses get to lunch without moving their cars and also assist in getting passengers to the Fireflies games.

**John Katz**- Mr. Katz, president of the Fireflies, stated that the Fireflies have a lot of volunteers and also hire low income employees. A lot of the volunteers and summer hires are students from the area colleges like Benedict, Allen and USC. We want to ensure that everyone to have safe passage to work and from the Fireflies Stadium. It would really help if the Board would consider the new Soda Cap Connector Route to be extended to the Bull Street Site. This would be an ideal way for the Volunteers, Students and Spectators to get back and forth to the game for work or pleasure.

**6a. INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES AND THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Attendees were asked to introduce themselves, following the individual introductions, Dr. Morris read a brief bio and then introduced the new incoming Executive Director Mr. John Andoh.

1. **CHAIR OF THE BOARD REPORT**

Ms. Dickerson, welcomed Mr. Andoh to the COMET and stated that he would be at the facility for the duration of the day, in the even anyone would like to meet with him.

1. **INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Ms. August stated that her report is in the Board materials on pages 15 – 19. Ms. August stated that she also with Ms. Mood and several others met with SCDOT regarding the Carolina Crossroads project. It was stated that it would be best if the COMET would meet with the CMCOG to discuss the possibility of a feasibility study regarding possibly Park and Ride lots within the Midlands, especially along I-26. Ms. August also stated that the COMET will have two Interns for the summer, compliments of Transdev and the Urban League. And that She along with Mr. DesChamps are working on and reviewing job descriptions. She also mentioned that during the SCDOT Meeting with Secretary Hall, the Newberry Commuter Route was mentioned and the reason for its discontinuance. It was suggested that SCDOT would continue to provide their funding portion for the Route if the local funding was provided for the service. SCDOT would provide the funding to the COMET again if they can work with the other municipalities regarding local funding for the Newberry commuter service.

1. **REPORT FROM SERVICE COMMITTEE**

There was no Service Committee Meeting in March.

1. **REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE, Chair – Andy Smith**

Mr. Smith stated that the committee met on March 14th. Mr. Smith reviewed the financial statements and stated that the COMET is actually ahead of schedule regarding revenues for the year; partially because of the grant dollars received. He stated that we have a good financial report.

Mr. Furgess stated that the literature that we are passing out at the hearings, stated that we have been mandated to reduce our service by 4900 hours. Mr. Smith explained it was based on the hours the board voted on; then Mr. Furgess asked, what did the hours relate to in dollars. Sam Scheib indicated that it was $352,000. Mr. Furgess asked, then can we follow that reduction into the Transdev payments. Mr. Scheib explained that the reduction in hours are coming from different places, and that it will not just come from Transdev. Mr. Furgess stated again that the information that we are putting out is stating that the board was mandated to reduce these hours, and that’s not true.

Mr. Howard stated that we need an itemized list, of exactly where the cost savings are coming from.

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Dr. Morris to put the discussion, implementation and service reduction on hold until the new Executive Director is on board and it can be evaluated.**

**Vote:**

**Favor: Mr. Howard, Mr. Furgess, Mr. Leaks, Ms. Gleaton, Dr. Morris**

**Opposed: Ms. Mood, Mr. Anderson, Ms. Harding, Mr. Smith, Ms. Dickerson**

**Motion Failed.**

**10a. APPROVAL OF SHELTER PROPOSED BUDGETING**

Mr. Smith stated that the Finance Committee is recommending that the board adopt Option A regarding the Shelter Proposed Budget Plan. This plan will get us to 81 shelters.

Discussion

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Leaks to adopt Option A of the Shelter Proposed Plan for Budgeting. Motion passed unanimously.**

**10b. NEW BUSINESS**

* Financial proposal/cost presented by Lexington County to the CMRTA Board for the additional trip on route 26 into Lexington County.
* A list of CMRTA employees whose positions are being funded by grants.
* A list of the grants that are funding positions at the CMRTA.

Mr. Furgess stated that we are providing a free route to Lexington County when routes that are near him are being cut by 2 hours, and he would like to know if he has a case.

Ms. Heizer, Esq. stated, that he does not have a case; and that Lexington County in the IGA states that they will pay for the full cost of any and all transit service in Lexington County.

Discussion

Ms. August reported that the COMET currently only have one staff person that is being paid for by a Grant, and that is our Travel Trainer. She has been paid by this grant since coming on board approx. 3 years ago.

Mr. Furgess indicated that he thought it was more. Ms. Ransom, Grants Manager, indicated at one time the COMET had another person, but that grant has since expired.

1. **APPROVAL OF FY19 BUDGET**

**Motion**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Leaks to approve the FY19 Budget. Motion passed unanimously.**

1. **APPROVAL OF COMET LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Leaks to approve the next COMET Leadership Academy. Motion passed unanimously.**

1. **REVIEW OF COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR MAY SERVICE CHANGE**

**Mr. Scheib reviewed the comments from the public hearings that were held regarding the May service changes.**

1. **APPROVAL OF MAY SERVICE CHANGE**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Dickerson to approve the May Service Changes with the exception of the Lexington County Route.**

**Ms. Mood amended motion to accept a contingency, if of no major changes come out of the additional public meetings.**

**Mr. Howard amended the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Gleaton to approve the route changes and remove all changes to the Route 22.**

**Vote:**

**Favor: Ms. Gleaton, Mr. Furgess, Mr. Howard, Dr. Morris**

**Opposed: Ms. Dickerson, Ms. Mood, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Smith, Mr. Leaks**

**Motion Failed**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Dickerson to approve May Service Changes with the exclusion of the Route 26 Lexington County, and as long as there are no major changes coming out of the additional public meetings.**

**Discussion**

**Vote**

**Favor: Mr. Anderson, Ms. Dickerson, Mr. Smith, Ms. Mood, Mr. Leaks**

**Opposed: Dr. Morris, Mr. Furgess, Ms. Gleaton, Mr. Howard**

**Motion passed.**

1. **APPROVAL OF SHELTER PROPOSED BUDGETING**

Discussed in item 10a.

1. **DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE-TRIENNIAL REVIEW CORRECTIVE ACTION (Timeline)**

Dr. Prince, Compliance Officer reviewed with the board the schedule for the DBE Public Participation Meeting that is scheduled for Thursday, March 29th at the COMET Lucius Road location. She also explained that a public consultation meeting was supposed to be held when the DBE Goal was submitted to FTA in 2016; and was not, which resulted in a finding during the 2017 Triennial Review. Holding this meeting and creating a timeline is important, as it pertained to resolving the Triennial Review Corrective Action.

1. **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business to discuss.

1. **MOTIONS PERIOD/NEW BUSINESS (No action from the motions are permitted)**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Leaks to have the Service Committee develop a long-term plan to replace the transit center and report back to the board with a road map in July.**

Discussion

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Leaks to direct the Service Committee working with the staff, to develop a plan to possibly restore the express bus service previously known as SmartRide from Newberry to Columbia.**

Discussion

**Motion withdrawn as it is scheduled to be coming back to the board in April from a previous motion.**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson to direct staff to approach SCDOT and CMCOG to request a park and ride study for the region.**

**Discussion**

**Motion dies for lack of a second.**

1. **NEW BUSINESS**

* Financial proposal/cost presented by Lexington County to the CMRTA Board for the additional trip on route 26 into Lexington County.
* A list of CMRTA employees whose positions are being funded by grants.
* A list of the grants that are funding positions at the CMRTA.

This information was discussed in Item 10b.

1. **LEGAL/CONTRACTUAL/PERSONNEL (may require executive session)**

* Report on Executive Director Contract; transition; and notice to Interim Executive Director
* Contractual matter regarding Contract Operator DBE Compliance
* Contractual matter regarding Contract Compliance by Subcontractor
* Amendment One to Contract Operator Contract
* Change order request regarding security at the Transit Center

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Mr. Anderson to enter into an Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Anderson to come out of Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Smith to officially give the Interim Executive Director her 30-days’ Notice; and that the board would like for Ms. August to stay on through the new Executive Director’s transition until May 15, 2018. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Dr. Morris to settle the contractual matter related to the DBE compliance as discussed in Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Smith to direct staff to perform a full audit of the DBE Subcontractor Operator performance. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Smith to approve the proposed Amendment 1 to the Contractor’s contract. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made Mr. Anderson and seconded by Dr. Morris to refer the Change Order to the Finance Committee and to anticipate an official change order going in to place July 1st relating to additional security at the transit center. Motion passed unanimously.**

1. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS (No Discussion Unless Specifically Requested)**

* Contract Operator’s Report
  + Fuel Cost/Price Update
  + Staff Reports
  + Other Information

1. **ADJOURN**

**Motion:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Howard to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.